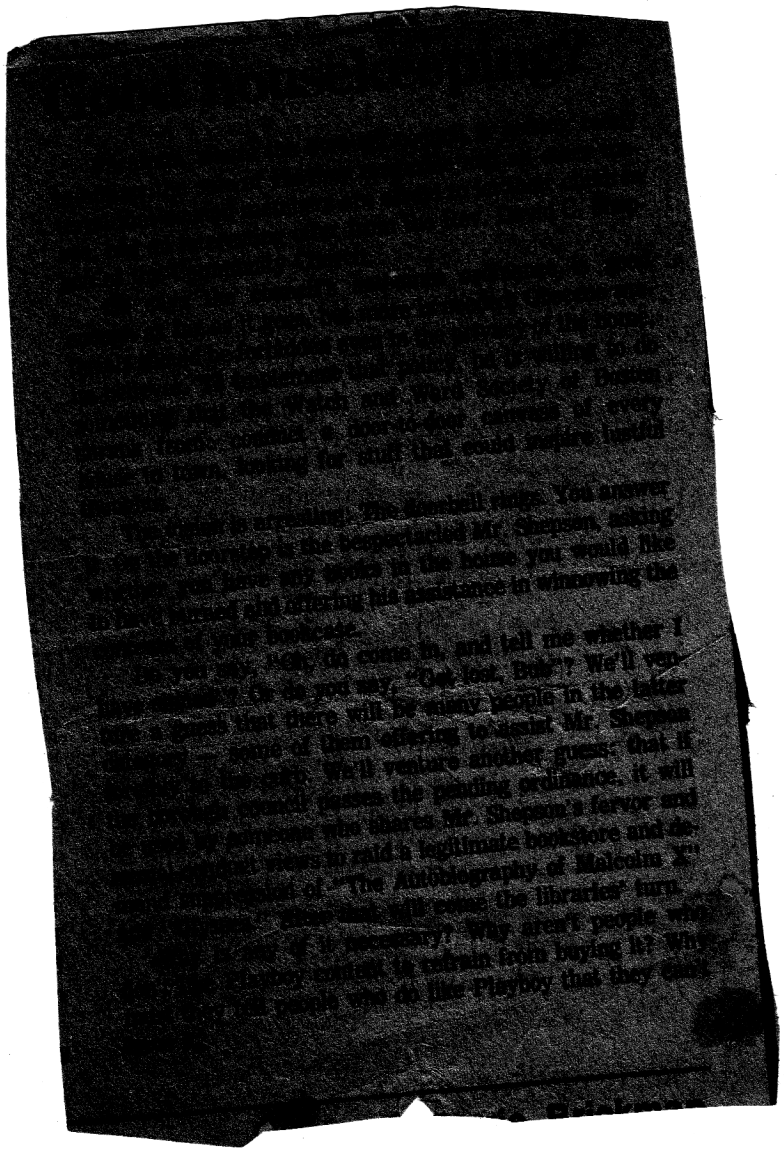

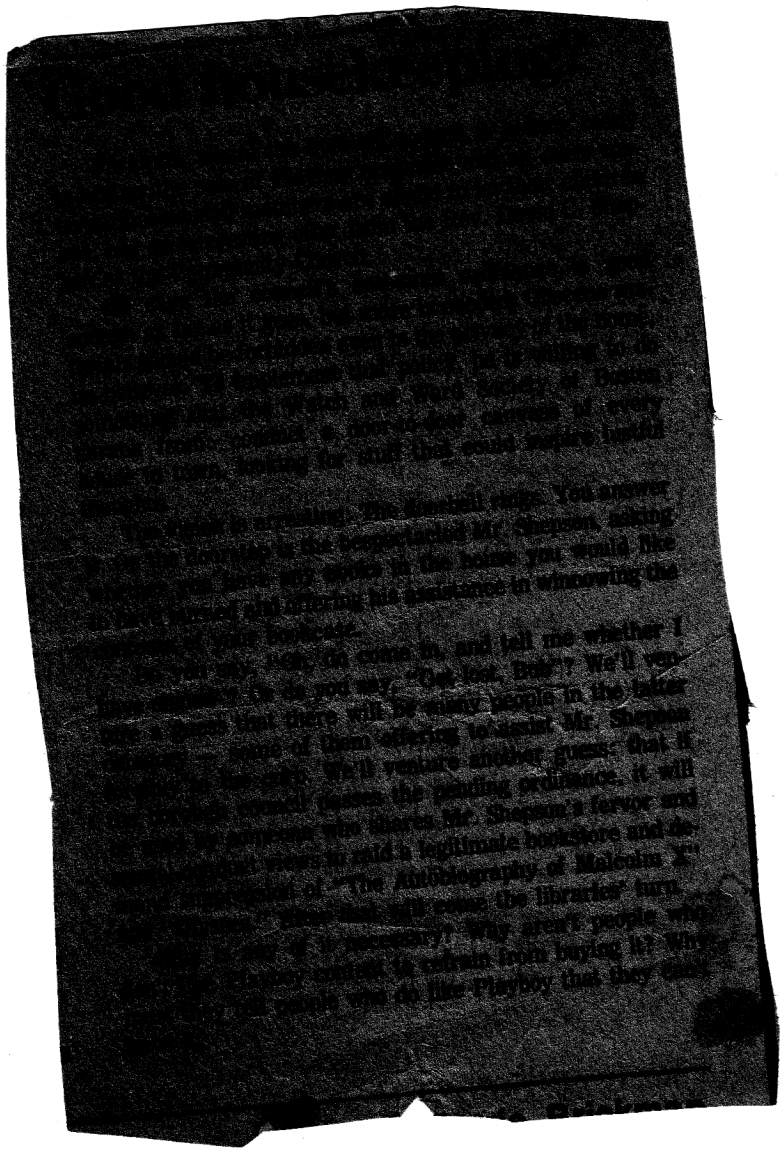

Good housekeeping?

Paramus, where the borough council is getting ready to outlaw the sale of Playboy magazine and all other material that council members are afraid to let their children see, has an interesting offer from the Rev. David C. Shepson of the Community Church.

He says the council's anti-smut ordinance is good enough as far as it goes, but more is needed. Obscene materials should be forbidden even in the privacy of the home, he believes. To implement that policy, he is willing to do something that the Watch and Ward Society of Boston shrank from: conduct a door-to-door canvass of every house in town, looking for stuff that could inspire lustful thoughts.

The vision is arresting: The doorbell rings. You answer it. On the doorstep is the bespectacled Mr. Shepson, asking whether you have any books in the house you would like to have burned and offering his assistance in winnowing the contents of your bookcase.

Do you say, "Oh, do come in, and tell me whether I have sinned"? Or do you say, "Get lost, Bub"? We'll venture a guess that there will be many people in the latter category — some of them offering to assist Mr. Shepson forcibly to the curb. We'll venture another guess: that if the borough council passes the pending ordinance, it will be used by someone who shares Mr. Shepson's fervor and sexual-conduct views to raid a legitimate bookstore and demand suppression of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" and "Ulysses." After that will come the libraries' turn.

Why is any of it necessary? Why aren't people who don't like Playboy content to refrain from buying it? Why must they tell people who do like Playboy that they can't have it?